SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

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CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION

editorial

The crowning of a courage fight

THE signing in Vientiane on February 21, 1973 of the Agreement on Restoring Peace and Realizing National Concord in Laos has brought to a glorious end the courageous effort of the Lao people. Since 12 hours on February 22, 1973 the hostilities have come to a stop and an in-place, global and simultaneous ceasse-fire has entered into force throughout the country, putting a halt to the US neo-colonialist war which for decades had been ravaging Laos. This land's revolution has reached a turning which opens up bright prospects for a peaceful, independent, neutral, democratic, united and prosperous country.

Never before have the Laos people's fundamental national rights and right to self-determination been brought to such prominence and given such firm guarantees as in the accord concluded.

The document has bound all Lao, US, Thailand and other foreign parties concerned to respect the kingdom's independence, peace and neutrality, to put a final and permanent stop to bombings throughout the Lao territory, to cease all intervention, aggression and military involvement in Laos. Foreign-organized equipped, trained and officered special forces shall be disbanded and military bases completely dismantled. A ban has been imposed on the introduction into Laos of foreign military personnel, regular and irregular troops. Foreign troops shall have to be withdrawn.

The accord emphatically spipulates that Lao internal affairs must be settled without foreign interference, that the two Lao parties shall negotiate an arrangement to establish an interim coalition government with equal membership and a joint political council to see to the affairs of state and the implementation of the cease-fire agreement. The latter has also provided for genuinely free and democratic elections for a national assembly and the formation of a regular national coalition government, specified democratic liberties for the people and abolished all laws and regulations at variance with such freedoms.

So a small but brave nation with a tremendous potential has at last carried the day. The event has brought with it a change of great magnitude and far-reaching effect in the balance of forces, in favour of the Lao revolution. With extensive liberated areas spreading from north to south, with a strong and battle-seasoned people's army, with the great internal and international credit of the Lao Patriotic Front and with the legal endorsement of the Vientiane Agreement, the Lao people are certain to fulfil their fondest wish and attain their lofty goal: a lasting peace, national concord, national unity and a peaceful, independent, neutral, democratic, reunified and prosperous Laos, whose achievement will be an active contribution to the consolidation of peace in Indochina and Southeast Asia.

The agreement signed also marked a dismal failure of the US-led aggressive and reactionary forces on the Indochinese peninsula, the setback of the US "special war," a war of great ferocity and fierceness, and the bankruptcy of the Nixon doctrine in Laos.

US bombs and bullets have been unable to bend the fighting will of the Lao people and to subdue a nation endowed with an unflinching dauntlessness in front of foreign invaders. For the Lao people whose strength has been growing in the course of the fighting under the glorious standard of the Lao Patriotic Front, nothing has succeeded like success and each success has been more substantial than the one before, and has paved the way to the present victory. In the teeth of US attempt to impose on the Lao people a neo-colonialist yoke, the agreement just reached has asserted and guaranteed their basic national right and right to self-determination in the most unequivocal manner.

In the confrontation with the US scheme to divide the Lao people and the various Lao ethnic groups with a view to emasculating and eventually crushing their sacred resistance, the latter's unity has been enhanced in their common endeavour. The Vientiane accord is also a resplendent illustration of their spirit of national concord, with which they are deeply imbued.

Despite all US exertions to downgrade the role of, and isolate, the Lao Patriotic Front, to sap the neutralist forces, and to put the "neutrality" fig leaf on the Lao rightist radicals, the Front's prestige, influence and policies have won the hearts and minds of the masses all over the country. The ceasefire agreement recognizes and ensures its legitimate status as well as that of all patriotic forces.

Against US intention to blot out the free zone and concentrate all Lao territory in the hands of the pro-US reactionary rule, thereby turning Laos into a US type colony, the accord just arrived at has forced the US - Vientiane government side to recognize and respect the liberated areas under the patriotic forces' control, on an equal footing with the Vientiane-swayed territory.

During their gruelling and protracted fight against the US aggressors and their agents, the Lao people have set a shining example of indomitableness. Their triumph is a great contribution to the Indochinese peoples' resistance against US aggression and for national salvation and to the world's peoples' national liberation movement. Like that of the Vietnamese, it has once more established the cogent truth that a small and weak nation, if single-minded and able to achieve national solidarity in the combat for a just cause, can successfully face up to any enemy, however strong and wherever hailing from. The Lao people's victory can also be credited to the Lao Patriotic Front's judicious and imaginative line and to the solidarity of the three Indochinese peoples.

Sharing the same enemy, the same fighting ditch and the same vicissitudes of life with the Lao people, the South Vietnamese hail with high elation and pride the latter's achievement as their own one and that of all the three Indochinese peoples. For it, they wish to convey to them their warmest congratulations. For their Lao brothers' stubborn fighting spirit and sense of self-sacrifice, they express their deepest appreciation and admiration.

Splendid vistas have come into view for the Lao, as already said above. But still reluctant to reconcile themselves to their serious reverse, the US aggressors and their foreign-controlled Lao arch-reactionaries are still nurturing dark designs to encroach upon the free zone, weaken the Lao patriotic forces, and thwart the Lao people's longing for peace, independence and national concord.

With the strength derived from their position of unquestionable justice and good will, from their experience in the struggle to safeguard their fundamental national rights, to protect and to enforce all international instruments related to Lao, the Lao people will surely respond to the appeal of the Patriotic Front, implement strictly and fully the cease-fire accord and resolutely frustrate all shady schemes of the foreign and home reactionary forces.

Bound for ever to the Lao people by fraternal ties, the South Vietnamese completely identify themselves with the latter's present fight.

The Lao people's just cause will undoubtedly triumph.

SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

A Lao PLA unit hailing victory

Our dear boys' home-coming

THE site chosen for the release of our boys due home today was north of the Quang Tri bridge where last spring, defying enemy bombs and bullets, they had waded across the Thach Han river in a devastating attack against the riverside railway station: a RSVN flag was then planted on the roof of the City Hall and inside the Citadel, the town of Quang Tri was entirely liberated and tens of thousands of people regained their freedom.

Less than 24 hours before the ceremony took place, Saigon troops, in violation of the cease-fire, had slammed 20 mortar shells on this place, including 7 toxic chemical shells, but their acrid smoke was soon driven away by a morning downpour. The sun appeared in the cloudless sky and along the limpid Thach Han river, red-blue yellow-starred flags fluttered in the wind. "Nothing is more precious than Independence and Freedom," in golden letters was prominent in a poster to welcome home those indomitable sons of the people.

At the appointed time, all personalities of our side were present: Mr Nguyen Van Hien, representing the revolutionary power of Quang Tri province and head of the reception committee: Mr Nguyen An Giang, representing the Quang Tri PLAF, deputy head of the reception committee; and 10 officers. It had been agreed by the Four-Party Joint Military Commission that representatives of the American and RVN sides should be present at 09.00 hours on Feb. 14, 1973, but only at 10.15 hours did a plane bring a list of returnees to the RSVN side (the list should have been handed in 48 hours earlier) and only at 14.00 hours could the ceremony begin with the attendance of members of the International Team for Control and Supervision, the Four-Party Joint Military Team and journalists from foreign countries and from the four parties.

Despite the shower, cold moonson wind, and months and years of a most inhuman treatment (even on the night of Feb. 13 they were given by the US and Saigon sides only rice and salt and plain water, and had to sleep on the ground in a very narrow cell of the Phu Bai prison), our brave fighters broke out into chanting "Long live the National Front for Liberation" once in the liberated area. By themselves, they gathered in neat rows and sang aloud the song "Let us liberate the South." A placard with a slogan written in his own blood by fighter Nguyen Van Sang and others were held high by them. They were made of bits of material torn off their own clothes, and the ink came from wringing a prisoner's violet shirt. Hidden ever since under the bandages of their wounds or inside their wooden crutches, they now suddenly appeared in all colours and all kinds of hand writing, having only this in common: words coming from the depth of their hearts. On seeing those posters, some members of the ICC and foreign journalists could not help exclaiming: "How admirable!" while among our fellow countrymen and comrades few were able to suppress their tears.

Nurse Nguyet rushed down and offered to carry the wounded up on her back "Our native land owes its liberation to you," stammered she. This province of Quang Tri had come under countless B.52 carpet-bombings and nearly all trees were burnt down, but the people had managed to find enough chrysanthemum and banana for our returning fighters. Those who could not walk as a result of brutalities suffered during their detention were carried by the local peasants on stretchers or on their own backs to a rest-house, where physicians immediately attended to them. They were classified according to their health condition and received each a parcel of gifts: they could now throw away their dirty prisoner's garnments and put on new PLAF uniforms which only brought out their proud looks.

The first fighter to set his foot on the liberated land of Quang Tri was Nguyen Van Trai, a man without a leg and whose wound was still unhealed. He had spent many months in enemy jails. Limping up on his clutches, he hugged a welcomer: "I am returned to my people" he said and, wiping his tears with his hand, he sang aloud "Let us liberate the South."

A Canadian and an American correspondents, accompanying the ICC team, zeroed in their cameras on this scene with tears in their eyes. An officer of the Saigon Army, who could neither hold up his tears, confided to a PLAF man standing near him: "What a fine feeling of solidarity and mutual affection you have!" The young liberation fighter with a red-and-blue armband replied smilingly, "It is just in the tradition of our Vietnamese nation!"

The reception ceremony for the first batch of home-coming fighters ended at 17.00 hours. Under an agreement between the four parties, 350 people should have been handed over to the RSVN PRG by the US and Saigon sides, but actually only 175 people were released. In the presence of the ICC team and the Four-Party Joint Military Team, Mr Nguyen Van Hien, representative of the PRG in Quang Tri, unequivocally laid the responsibility for this breach on the US and Saigon sides, which duly acknowledged it.

The downpour became heavier and the wind fiercer. But nothing could drown the tunes of the song "Let us sacrifice ourselves for the people" sung in unison by our boys. And their cars ran through former enemy airfields and gun positions laid waste by our offensives in last year's spring and through verdant fields of rice and potato, to bring them back to the warm love of the people, in this triumphant spring of the nation.

PARIS AGREEMENT GREETED EVERYWHERE

"PEACE is restored!", this resounded everywhere from the free zone to areas still under enemy control. Peace and the future of the country became the main topic. In defiance of prohibition and repression, our fellow countrymen tuned in *The Voice of Viet Nam* (Radio-Hanoi) and *Radio Liberation* for more factual information on the peace agreement. They especially welcomed the policy of national concord proclaimed by the Provisional Revolutionary Government.

Meetings and rallies were staged in all localities. RSVN flags were hoisted and Nguyen Van Thieu's three-stripe flags torn down. By the thousands, copies of the text of the Peace Agreement were circulated from hand to hand while innumerable posters were put up. In Ben Tre, tens of thousands of detainees in "resettlement centres" and "strategic hamlets" rose up to do away with all forms of coercion of the Saigon administration, demand their return to their native villages and set up Committees for the implementation of the peace agreement and the achievement of peace and national concord. In some places, memorials were erected for those who laid down their lives for the survival of the nation and for peace. There prevailed a general resolve to make a contribution to the Revolution and to stand ready and thwart all manoeuvres against the Paris Agreement on the part of the Saigon administration.

In spite of obstacles raised by the Saigon regime, daily papers in Vietnamese and Chinese languages all carried on January 28 the full text of the Peace Agreement and its Protocols. Some overtly lauded the Agreement as an invaluable document which fully meets the aspirations of the entire people. All copies of those papers were bought by Saigonese of all walks of life.

At the Z. weaving-mill, female workers greeted the happy news with shouts of joy.

A graduate in law and his friend, a journalist, discussed ways to raise enough money for editing a newspaper. The jurist was confident that in peace, journalism will be a rewarding occupation which would no longer require the security of 20 million piasters and fear confiscation or censorship. He would be free to write without having to bother about Decree No 7 (that is Thieu's fascist press regulation). His paper would bare all base tricks of the Saigon administration.

To Architecture students, the restoration of peace afforded an opportunity to do their bits in the reconstruction of the homeland.

Together with their fellow-countrymen and members of their own families, many security and "civil-defence" men enthusiastically welcomed the return of peace and fought for *Têt* leaves. At Cu Chi, armymen firmly refused their commander's orders to erect Saigon flags and occupy fresh territories. Many officers and troopsmen even sent their representatives to express to local revolutionary authorities their appreciation of the PRG policy of national concord and pledged their shares in the building of the nation in peace. "I am for a strict implementation of the Paris Agreement," said the commander of the Binh Chanh post, "I will go back to my native land to earn an honest living." A group of militarymen belonging to Division 25 shouted: "Since peace is now restored, we'll no longer serve as soldiers, we'll turn in our US guns and uniforms and go back to our native places." Armymen at Huong Thuy (Thua Thien province) also said: "The best course is to hand in our guns and come back to our family." In Quang Da province, many soldiers threw down their guns and clasped the local people's hands: "Peace! National Concord!", they shouted and then posed for a photo to mark the first day of peace and national concord.

SAIGON'S CRUDE VIOLATIONS OF THE CEASE-FIRE

SINCE the coming into force of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam, the Saigon administration has repeatedly committed serious breaches of it and many crimes against the civilians. Many military operations have been mounted against patriots and peaceloving people in areas under its control.

Besides the repression and secret disposal of detained patriots and peace militants, the "Phoenix" organisation, police and security forces have been ordered to arrest relatives of those South Vietnamese regrouped to the North in 1954 or those who took part in the recent war of resistance, and to take them to unknown destinations for execution.

In Hue, some 400 police have been dispatched to the country. Besides, about 500 police raids were undertaken between Jan. 29 and Feb. 4, during which thousands of people were taken into custody. Control in concentration camps and villages has been strengthened, and the people are prevented from going about their business or from returning to their old places of residence. On Feb. 1 and 3, thousands of villagers in Phong Son and Phong Binh of Phong Dien district, Thua Thien province, were forced into An Lo concentration camp or resettled in areas surrounded by military posts, and this right during the traditional Tet. The Nguyen Van Thieu administration is also tightening its grip over each district and ward in Saigon by organising many shock "civil-defence" teams commanded by security and army officers. The aim of the move is to make of this organisation an indigenous counter-revolutionary force.

Security and plainclothes agents shadow anyone suspected of being in contact with the revolution, and families whose members have taken part in the struggle against US aggression and Thieu's rule. At the same time, 2,000 cadets from the military academy and 5,000 army officers have been assigned to villages and hamlets as reinforcements of the coercive apparatus and of the propaganda machine which tries to misrepresent the Paris Agreement and undermine peace and national concord. All this has resulted in a great tension.

The Saigon administration is also trying to hold back the names of a great part of the hundreds of thousands of patriots still detained in a thousand-odd prisons and stockades throughout South Viet Nam by understating their number as about 5,000 only. Moreover, it has refused to return around 16,000 military personnel, alleging that they have "gone over to the just cause." On Jan. 29 and 30, 513 captured military personnel were transfered to the "Open Arms Service" in Kien Phong province for dispersion, control or secret execution. In Chi Hoa prison (Saigon) and Cay Dua prison on Phu Quoc Island, 50,000 political prisoners have been divided into small groups and mixed with common-law offenders. On Jan. 28, 300 political prisoners long detained on Phu Quoc Island were moved to a detention camp in Soc Trang province. 50 of them, many seriously ill, like Mr Pham Van Phuoc, were then helilifted to unknown places.

The Saigon administration has also made many declarations clashing with the spirit and letter of the Paris Agreement and its Protocols. It has issued a series of instructions for actions violating the Agreement's provisions, like those to a 125,000-strong police force to stage round-ups in the cities and shoot dead "instigators" including refugees who want to return to their villages.

There is no denying that the Saigon administration's words and deeds in these last days are diametrically opposed to the spirit and letter of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and its Protocols, and completely at variance with the aspirations for peace of the peoples of Viet Nam, the United States, and the world.

SERIOUS VIOLATIONS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON VIET NAM

THE Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam has come into force for nearly a month. Violations of extreme gravity have been committed by the US-tolerated and shielded Saigon administration of this accord, especially of its articles 3-c and 16-a on the cessation of hostilities, troops withdrawals and the ensuring of the normal operation of the Joint Military Commissions. Such a situation is very explosive. The Feb. 10 statement of the Foreign Ministry of the RSVN PRG has exposed the breaches before public opinion at home and abroad. The Saigon administration has done its best to conceal and falsify the truth about them, but the world has grown more and more aware of the existence of two different attitudes as far as the implementation of the Paris Agreement is concerned.

The RSVN PRG has been strictly abiding by all provisions of the Agreement and its protocols and expecting the same from the Saigon administration. The order of the cease-fire in-place has been fully executed by the Liberation Armed Forces. Self-restraint has been shown by the people and armed forces of the liberated area in face of provocations and inroads by the Saigon troops. Many foreign correspondents visiting the free zone after the cease-fire were able to hear the following comments from grassroot cadres of the NFL and PRG : " We have been given the order to cease all hostile actions, except when attacked" (*AFP*, Feb. 2), "We have been ordered to strictly implement the Agreement, take no reprisals against the Saigon troops in order to create no difficulty to the local people " (*AFP*, Feb. 5). In the PRG and DRVN sides participation in the Joint Military Commissions and in the return of the first contingent of captured military personnel and foreign civilians our good will has been obvious.

A totally different behaviour has been that of the Saigon administration who has overtly challenged the most fundamental clauses of the Paris Agreement:

The cease-fire has not only been ignored, but even sabotaged. Up to now, more than 23.500 cases of violation, that is about 800 cases per day on an average, have been committed by its troops in the form of endless " mopping-up " operations against the liberated areas in almost all provinces of South Viet Nam, from Quang Tri to the Mekong Delta. Their motive is to enlarge the territory under its control and implement its so-called " program to overflow territory. " In those operations, full use has been made of regular and para military forces with the support of tanks, armoured cars, artillery and aircraft and even toxic chemicals and the troops hurled against the territory under control of the PRG have been of regiment, brigade and even division sizes. Particularly serious were the incursions against the area South of Cua Viet by Saigon " marine " brigades from January 28 to early February 1973, the offensive against the Cao Dai sect area at Tay Ninh by Regiment 49, Division 25, several " ranger" batallions and units of armour regiment 22 on January 28 and 29, the " burn all, destroy all " operation against the liberated territory of Quang Ngai province by two Regiments 4 and 5 of Division 2 and by 3 ranger battalions from February 3 to 6, the inroad into the free areas of My Tho, Ben Tre, Tra Vinh, Can Tho... provinces in the Mekong delta from mid-Jan. to mid-Feb. by units belonging to Divisions 7 and 21 and various security battalions.

Saigon bombers have been flying more than 200 sorties a day against the liberated areas, while its navy and artillery have been pounding day and night populated regions under control of the PRG sometimes with big-caliber 105 and 155mm shells for 16 hours on end, like along Highway 14 on February 1 and 2. Those violations of the Paris Agreements have resulted in serious losses in human lives and property for the people in the liberated areas.

Regarding the deployment of the machinery which has to see to the implementation of the Agreement and the withdrawal of troops, the US and Saigon authorities have also been resorting to all means of sabotage and hindrance. They delayed the setting-up of the Four-Party Joint Military Commissions at every level. Even now, that is nearly one month after the cease-fire became effective, not all Regional Joint Military Commissions have been set up, whereas Article 15 of the Protocol concerning the cease-fire in South Viet Nam and the Joint Military Commissions stipulates that " the Regional Joint Military Commissions shall begin operating 48 hours after the cease-fire comes into force. " The Saigon authorities surrounded and provoked PRG and DRVN military delegations, gave them living and working accommodation not in the place stipulated in the Agreement and provided them with inadequate facilities for living and discharging their tasks, prevented their movements and even brutalized their members.

In obstructing the activities of the Joint Military Commissions — bodies entrusted with the coordinating of the implementation by the parties concerned of the provisions of the Agreement and above all of the provisions concerning the cease-fire, the Saigon administration has revealed its intention to wreck the Agreement as a whole and prolong the war. Its violations of the Paris Agreement have assumed a systematic and serious character.

Remarkably enough, the United States has tolerated and tried to cover up such offences of the Saigon regime. Moreover, it has itself failed to implement many passions of the Paris Agreement. It refused to inform the Four-Party Joint Military Commission and the International Commission of its troop pull-out schedule, places and composition. It refused to dismantle its military bases as provided for by Article 6 of the Agreement, on the ground that those bases had been transferred to the Saigon administration. It is quite clear that it is striving to delay the implementation of the military clauses of the Agreement, increase the military potential of the Saigon troops with a view to using them as tools for achieving US neo-colonialism in South Viet Nam. The withdrawal of Pak Jung Hi troops has also been dragged out and delayed in the same way as the US troops.

The Paris Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam is a great victory of the Vietnamese people and of all peace-and justice-loving peoples in the world, including the American people. Its strict implementation is the right way to lasting peace and will make possible favourable the realization of the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights and the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination. The trend to peace, independence, democracy and national concord is an irresistible one. Those who oppose it will only court humiliating failure. The South Vietnamese firmly insist that the Saigon administration give up its negative attitude and its sabotage of the Agreement and seriously implement it. The first step is to abide by the cease-fire and to stop all acts of hostility, terror and reprisal against the South Vietnamese. The US government must fulfill its responsibility and obligation towards the Agreement and its Protocols, and no longer tolerate and screen the Saigon administration's breaches of the Agreement.

Ltn-general Tran Van Tra, head of the RSVN PRG military delegation to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission put forward at the February 14 session of the Commission some concrete proposals aimed at ensuring the cease-fire. On Feb. 16, the Central Four-Party Joint Military Commission issued a joint appeal, urging all parties in in South Viet Nam to completely end all hostile actions throughout South Viet Nam, strictly abide by the cease-fire, settle all problems through peaceful negotiations in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord. The South Vietnamese people expect all parties concerned to favorably respond to this appeal and honour their pledges.

APPEAL OF CENTRAL FOUR-PARTY JMC

ON February 16th, 1973, the Central Four-Party Joint Military Commission has issued the following appeal :

" The Central Four-Party Joint Military Commission considering that the High Commands of the parties in South Viet Nam have all ordered the armed forces and armed police under their command to end hostilities completely on the whole territory of South Viet Nam at the exact time stipulated in Article 2 of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam, and

Seeing that gun fire has not been stopped and the ceasefire has not been consolidated in keeping with the Agreement and the Protocol concerning the Ceasefire in South Viet Nam, and with the South Vietnamese people's desire for peace,

Now urgently calls upon the High Commands of the South Vietnamese parties

1. To order at once all the armed forces, regular and irregular, and armed police under their command to stop hostilities everywhere in South Viet Nam, fully respect the ceasefire, and settle all problems by peaceful negotiations, in the spirit of national reconciliation and concord, so that conflicts may be avoided and peace preserved ;

2. To order at once the armed forces, regular and irregular, and armed police under their command to scrupulously observe the prohibition of the following acts, as specified in Article 2 of the Protocol on the Ceasefire in South Viet Nam :

— Armed patrols into areas controlled by opposing armed forces, and flights by bombers and fighter aircraft of all types, except for unarmed flights for proficiency training and maintenance ;

— Armed attacks against any person, either military or civilian, by any means whatsoever, including the use of small arms, mortars, artillery, bombing and strafing by airplanes, and any other type of weapon or explosive devices ;

— All combat operations on the ground, on rivers, on the sea and in the air ;

— All hostile acts, terrorism or reprisals ; and

— All acts endangering lives or public or private property.

PLAF political department's order

THE Political Department of the South Viet Vam People's Liberation Armed Forces on February 17 instructed its regular units, regional forces and guerillas to quickly and widely disseminate the joint appeal of the Central Four-Party Joint Military Commission for strict observance of the cease-fire order by all parties in the Viet Nam war instruction ; while continuing to scrupulously implement the cease-fire order of the PLAF Command issued on Jan. 27, 1973, all units should bring the content of the Joint Appeal of the Central Four-Party JMC to the knowledge of all officers, combatants and people in their stationing areas.

MESSAGE

from President NGUYEN HUU THO and President HUYNH TAN PHAT to Prince SOUPHANOUVONG,

Chairman of the Central Committee of the Lao Patriotic Front

SAM NEUA

On the occasion of the signing of the Agreement on Restoring Peace and Achieving National Concord in Laos, on behalf of the people, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the RSVN and in our own names, we wish to convey to Your Highness and the brotherly Lao people our warmest congratulations.

The signing of this Agreement is a historic event which has a great significance to the Lao people in their protracted and valiant struggle full of hardships and sacrifices for independence and freedom.

This Agreement puts an end to the barbarous aggression of the US imperialists, recognizes the sacred and inalienable fundamental national rights of the Lao people namely independence, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and the right to self-determination. It has ushered in a new and bright era of the revolutionary development in Laos, and made an active contribution to the consolidation of peace in Indochina and Southeast Asia.

This is a tremendously great and allround victory of the heroic Lao people under the clear-sighted leadership of the glorious Lao Patriotic Front. This is a great victory of the close militant solidarity between the three Indochinese peoples, of the sympathy and active support of the peace- and justice-loving people all over the world. This victory is a very great and precious contribution to the movement for national liberation, democracy and social progress in the world.

A companion-in-arm and close neighbor, sharing wealth and woe with the Lao people in the struggle against the common enemy, the South Vietnamese people are overjoyed, enthusiastic and proud at this great victory of the fraternal Lao people and consider it as a source of strong and precious encouragement to the South Vietnamese people who are continuing their struggle for peace, independence, democracy and national concord in South Viet Nam, toward peaceful reunification of the country.

Loyal to the Joint Declaration of the Summit Conference of the Indochinese Peoples, the South Vietnamese people unswervingly pledge to strengthen their militant solidarity with the fraternal Lao and Cambodian peoples in the struggle for genuine independence and peace of the three Indochinese countries.

We firmly believed that with the glorious tradition of revolutionary struggle and total support of the world peoples the fraternal Lao people will win new and greater victories in the building of a peaceful, independent, neutral, democratic, unified and prosperous Laos.

May the friendship and close solidarity between the South Vietnamese and Lao peoples last forever.

South Viet Nam, February 22, 1973

Mo NGUYEN HUU THO

President of the Presidium of the CC of the NFL, President of the Advisory Council of the RSVN PRG

HUYNH TAN PHAT

President of the RSVN PRG

AGREEMENT ON RESTORING PEACE AND ACHIEVING NATIONAL CONCORD IN LAOS

IN response to the august desire of His Majesty the King and the earnest aspirations of the people of all nationalities across the country for a prompt end to the war, the restoration and firm maintenance of lasting peace, the achievement of national concord, the unification of the country, the building of a peaceful, independent, neutral, democratic, unified and prosperous Laos in order to make a positive contribution to the consolidation of peace in Indochina and Southeast Asia,

On the basis of the 1962 Geneva Agreement and the present realities in Laos,

The Vientiane government side and the side of the patriotic forces have unanimously agreed upon the following:

CHAPTER I

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Article 1

a) The Lao people's will is to firmly preserve and resolutely exercise their sacred, inviolable fundamental national rights namely independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Laos.

b) The Declaration on the Neutrality of Laos on July 9, 1962 and the 1962 Geneva Agreement on Laos are correct bases for the Kingdom of Laos foreign policies of independence, peace and neutrality. They must be respected and scrupulously observed by the Lao parties concerned, the United States of America, Thailand and the other foreign countries.

The internal affairs of Laos must be settled by the Lao people themselves, without foreign interference.

c) In pursuit of the supreme goal of restoring peace, consolidating independence, achieving national concord and unifying the country, and taking into consideration the present realities of Laos where there are two zones separately controlled by the two sides, the internal affairs of Laos should be settled in the spirit of national concord and on the principles of equality and mutual respect, free from pressure or annexation by either side.

d) To preserve national independence and sovereignty, achieve national concord and unify the country, the people's democratic freedoms must be scrupulously observed, which comprise individual freedom, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of press, freedom of assembly, freedom of setting up political parties and organizations, freedom of election and standing for election, freedom of movement, freedom of residence, free enterprise and the right to private property ownership. All laws, regulations and institutions contrary to these freedoms shall be abolished.

CHAPTER II

MILITARY PROVISIONS

Article 2

Beginning from 12.00 hours (Vientiane time) on Feb. 22, 1973 a total simultaneous cease-fire in-place shall be observed throughout the Lao territory, which will comprise the following measures:

b) Foreign countries end completely and definitively all their bombardments on the whole Lao territory, stop all their acts of intervention and aggression against Laos, and terminate their military involvement of all kinds in Laos.

b) The armed forces of foreign countries end completely and definitively all military activities in Laos.

c) The armed forces of the Lao parties completely discontinue all military acts that constitute hostilities on the ground and in the air.

Article 3

After the ceasefire comes into effect:

a) All military acts of assault, annexation, threat or violation on the ground and in the air by one party against the areas under the temporary control of the other party are strictly prohibited.

b) All hostile military acts including the activities of bandits and commandos and armed activities and espionage on the ground and in the air are strictly prohibited.

In case one of the parties should want to supply its men in food by going through the zone under the control of the other party, the Joint Commission for Implementation of the Agreement will discuss this and define, upon common agreement, the concrete modalities for the supply.

c) All the raids and operations of terror, repression and infringement on the people's lives and property, and all acts of reprisal and discrimination against those who collaborated with the other side during the war shall be strictly prohibited; assistance shall be given to people who were forced to leave their native villages during the war to help them return there freely to earn their living according to their desire.

d) The introduction into Laos of all military personnel, of all kinds of regular or irregular troops, and all kinds of armament and war material of foreign countries, except for the ones provided for by the 1954 and 1962 Agreements, shall be prohibited. In case a replacement of damaged or worn-out armament and war material should prove necessary, the two parties will discuss it and will take decisions by common agreement.

Article 4

Within sixty days after the setting up of the Provisional National Union Government and the National Political Consultative Council, the total withdrawal from Laos of all military personnel, regular and irregular troops of foreign countries, and the dissolution of the military and para-military organizations of foreign countries shall be completed.

The 'Special Forces' organized, equipped, trained and commanded by foreigners shall be dissolved, and all the bases, installations and positions of these forces shall be dismantled.

Article 5

Each of the two parties shall return to the other party the persons, regardless of their nationalities, who have been captured and detained because of their collaboration with the other party during the war.

This return will be carried out according to modalities jointly defined by the two parties, and completed, at the latest, within 60 days after the setting up of the Provisional National Union Government and the National Political Consultative Council.

After the completion of the return of all the captured personnel, each of the two parties will have the obligation of seeking for those reported missing during the war, and of supplying the other party with information about them.

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL PROVISIONS

Article 6

Genuinely free and democratic general elections shall be organized to set up the National Assembly and set up a definitive National Union Government authentically representing the people of all nationalities of Laos. The modalities and time for these general elections will be discussed and agreed upon by the two sides.

Pending the general elections, the two sides, within 30 days after the signing of the Agreement, shall complete the formation of a new Provisional National Union Government and a National Political Consultative Council to implement the provisions of the Agreement and handle State affairs.

Article 7

The new Provisional National Union Government will comprise representatives of the Vientiane government and of the patriotic forces with equal numbers, and two personalities who stand for peace, independence, neutrality, and democracy and who will be chosen by the two sides by common agreement. The future prime minister will not be included in the two equal numbers of representatives of the two parties. The Provisional Union Government will be set up following a special prodedure through direct investiture by His Majesty the King and will function in accordance with the principle of unanimity of the two sides. Its task is to implement the Agreement and the Political Programme agreed upon by the two sides, especially to implement and maintain the cease-fire, safeguard lasting peace, observe all democratic freedoms of the people, practise a foreign policy of peace, independence and neutrality, coordinate the plans for economic construction and cultural development, and receive and distribute the common aid given by various countries to Laos.

Article 8

The National Political Consultative Council, organ of national concord, will comprise representatives of the Vientiane government and the patriotic forces with equal numbers and a number of personalities approving peace, independence, neutrality and democracy to be chosen by the two sides. It will function in accordance with the principle of unanimity of the two parties. Its task is:

— To discuss with the Provisional National Union Government major questions relating to domestic, and foreign policies and present its views regarding these questions to the PNUG.

The signing ceremony

— To promote and help the PNUG and the two sides in the implementation of the Agreement in order to achieve national concord.

— To examine and adopt together the laws and regulations for the elections and join the PNUG in organizing general elections to set up the National Assembly and a definitive National Union Government.

The prodedure for the establishment of the National Political Consultative Council is as follows: The two parties will discuss it in detail and take a joint decision on this subject. This decision will then be submitted to the Provisional National Union Government, which in turn will submit it to His Majesty the King for investiture. The same procedure will be applied to the dissolution of the National Political Consultative Council.

Article 9

The two sides agreed to neutralize the Royal Capital of Luang Praban, and the Vientiane capital, and to find all measures to ensure the security and the effective functioning of the Provisional National Union Government and the National Political Consultative Council and prevent all sabotage of pressure by any force from within and without.

Article 10

a) Pending the election to the National Assembly and the setting up of the Provisional National Union Government, the two parties, in the spirit of Article 6 of Chapter II of the Zurich Joint Communiqué of June 22 1961, will keep the areas under their temporary control, and endeavour to carry out the Political Programme of the Provisional National Union Government, as agreed upon by the two parties.

b) The two parties will step up the establishment of normal relations between the two zones, create favourable conditions for the population to move about, earn their living, exchange visits, and make economic, cultural and other exchanges with a view to consolidating national concord and unifying the country at an early date.

c) The two parties take note of the US government's statement that it will contribute to the healing of the wounds of war and to the post-war reconstruction in the whole of Indochina. The Provisional National Union Government will discuss this contribution with the US government, as far as Laos in concerned.

CHAPTER IV

THE JOINT COMMISSION FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SUPERVISION AND CONTROL

Article 11

The responsibility for the implementation of the Agreement rests mainly with the two parties concerned in Laos. These two sides shall set up at once a Joint Commission for Implementation of the Agreement with equal numbers of representatives. The Joint Commission for Implementation of the Agreement shall begin functioning immediately after the ceasefire comes into effect. It will work in accordance with the principle of discussion and unanimous decision.

Article 12

The International Commission for Supervision and Control set up following the 1962 Geneva Agreement on Laos, composed of India, Poland and Canada, with India as chairman, will continue its activities in accordance with the tasks, power and principles as provided for in the Protocol of the said Geneva Agreement.

CHAPTER V

OTHER PROVISIONS

Article 13

The Vientiane government party and that of the patriotic forces undertake to implement this Agreement and continue negotiations to carry out all the provisions already agreed upon and settle the pending questions concerning them, in the spirit of equality and mutual respect so as to end the war, restore and preserve peace in a steady and durable manner, achieve national concord and national reunification, and ultimately build a peaceful, independent, neutral, democratic, unified and prosperous Laos.

Article 14

The Agreement shall enter into force from the date of its signature.

Done in Vientiane on February 21, 1973 in the Lao language in five copies. One copy will be submitted to His Majesty the King; each party will keep one copy, and the Provisional National Union Government and the Political Consultative Council will keep each one copy for their files.

For the party of the Vientiane government

PHAGNA PHENG PHONGSAVAN

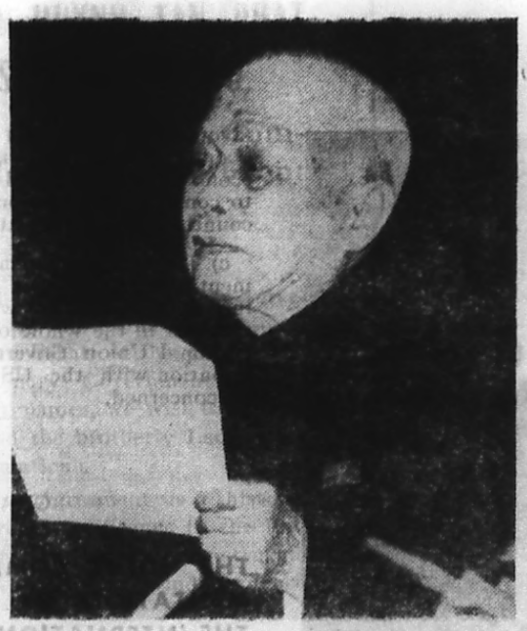
Plenipotentiary Special Representative of the Vientiane government.

For the party of the patriotic forces

PHAGNA PHOUMI VONGVICHIT

Plenipotentiary Special Representative of the Patriotic Forces.

THE PARIS AGREEMENT HAS TAKEN NOTE OF OUR PEOPLE'S GLORIOUS VICTORIES



President Ton Duc Thang at the special session of the DRVN National Assembly

THE great victory of the Vietnamese people's resistance against US aggression, for national salvation, was enthusiastically welcomed at the special session of the DRVN National Assembly which opened on February, 20, 1973.

The special session has heard a report of the Government on the victory of the patriotic struggle which finds a concentrated expression in the signing of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam. It has also heard reports on the new situation and the new tasks. The session, attended by deputies from all constituencies, is held in the meeting hall located at the historic Ba Dinh Square in an atmosphere overbrimming with the joy of victory.

Taking part in the presidium of the session were Ton Duc Thang, Nguyen Luong Bang, Le Duan, Truong Chinh, Pham Van Dong, Vo Vguyen Giap, Nguyen Duy Trinh, and others. Members of the Council of ministers representatives of various branches and mass organizations and diplomatic envoys also attended the inauguration.

After the opening speech by Chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee Truong Chinh, Premier Pham Van Dong delivered the report of the Government.

In his speech, Premier Pham Van Dong stressed :

"The struggle against US aggression and for national salvation—the greatest war of resistance in the Vietnamese nation's history of struggle against foreign aggression—has yielded a great and resounding result : the conclusion of the "Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam."

"The Paris Agreement has taken note of the glorious victories that our people have recorded in the more than ten years of continuous struggle, bringing to failure the war of aggression conducted by the US imperialists in both zones of our country with the most modern war means (except the atomic bomb) and the most brutal and most perfidious methods."

He remarked that the struggle of the Vietnamese people had borne out a brilliant truth of the present epoch — that a nation with a relatively small territory and a relatively small population, but which follows a correct line and which is united as one man, fights with valour and the firm determination to win and moreover, enjoys the great support and great assistance of the socialist countries and the progressive people of the world, will win final victory without fail.

"The Paris Agreement on Viet Nam is a document of international political and juridical value. It contains extremely important points—"ending the war and restoring peace in Viet Nam on the basis of respect for the Vietnamese people's right to self-determination ;" "the United States and all other countries respect the independence, sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity of Viet Nam as recognized by the 1954 Geneva Agreements on Viet Nam ;" "the United States will not continue its military involvement or intervene in the internal affairs of South Viet Nam ; " "there will be a total withdrawal from South Viet Nam of troops, military advisers, and military personnel..., armaments, munitions, and war material of the United States and those of the other foreign countries " allied to it, "and there will be the dismantlement of all their military bases in South Viet Nam."

The agreement has recognized the right to self-determination of the South Vietnamese people which is considered as a "sacred, inalienable" right to be respected by all countries. It provides t at "the South Vietnamese people shall decide themselves the political future of South Viet Nam through genuinely free and democratic general elections under international supervision " to set up institutions that suit their aspiration, and that "foreign countries shall not impose any political tendency or personality on the South Vietnamese people. " The Paris Agreement, in its letter and spirit, is an affirmation of the real situation now prevailing in South Viet Nam, where exist two administrations, two armies, two zones of control, and three political forces. The two South Vietnamese parties have undertaken to observe the ceasefire and maintain a stable and durable peace, to achieve national reconciliation and concord, and to ensure the democratic liberties of the people. They undertake to "hold consultations in a spirit of national reconciliation and concord, mutual respect and mutal non-elimination to set up a National Council of National Reconciliation and Concord of three equal segments " and will "sign an agreement on the internal matters of South Viet Nam" within 90 days.

"The Agreement has also provided that the reunification of Viet Nam shall be carried out step by step through peaceful means on the basis of discussions and agreements between North and South Viet Nam without coercion or annexation by either party, and without foreign interference." Regarding the military demarcation line between the two zones at the 17th parallel, the Agreement provides that pending the reunification of Viet Nam, this demarcation line " is only provisional and not a political or territorial boundary " and that "North and South Viet Nam shall promptly start negotiations with a view to reestablishing normal relations in various fields. "

On the cause of the victory of the Vietnamese nation, the Prime Minister said :

"While voicing satisfaction of our victory today, we see still more clearly its profound cause : it is the line of our Party, the great Viet Nam Workers' Party founded, organized and educated by President Ho Chi Minh.

"A very important factor of our victory is the socialist regime in the North, the position, strength and fight of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam, firm outpost of the socialist system in Southeast Asia, powerful base of the revolution in the whole country.

"Our people's victory is closly linked to the unshakable militant solidarity among the three Indochinese people's summit conference, our people pledge themselves to strengthen solidariry with the two neighbouring and brother peoples and to wholeheartedly support and assist the just struggle of the peoples of Laos and Cambodia till total victory.

"For many years, the just and bound-to-be victorious struggle of our people has constantly enjoyed great, precious and efficacious international sympathy and support and assistance. Our people's patriotic struggle against US aggression is closely associated with the struggle of the world's peoples for peace, national independence, democracy and social progress. Our people's fight therefore bears all the more the character of an epoch-making historic struggle.

"That is for us an extremly precious encouragement of which every Vietnamese must appreciate the full significance and value, so as to continue the struggle for our legitimate interests as well as the great thoughts of our time. Today, the Vietnamese people express to the peoples of the Soviet Union, China, and the other brother socialist countries, to the working class, the workers and the oppressed peoples all over the world, to the progressive people in the United States, to our brothers, comrades and friends in the five continents, our sincerest sentiments and our most profound gratitude. "

Dealing with the implementation of the Paris Agreement, Premier Pham Van Dong declared :

"With regard to the Paris Agreement, our policy consists in strictly respecting and scrupulously implementing it, and in urging that the United States government and the Saigon administration do the same. "

"With the approval and support of the United States, the Saigon administration has openly and systematically sabotaged the implementation of the most important and urgent provisions of the Agreement, in the first place, those concerning the ceasefire, democratic liberties, the return of captured and detained persons, the activities of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission and the International Commission of Control and Supervision... Here, we must underline and denounce the violations of the provisions regarding the ceasefire which aim at ensuring the restoration, maintenance and consolidation of peace, as well as the provisions on democratic liberties and national concord. Since the Paris Agreement came into effect, the Saigon administration has many times declared that it does not respect the agreement. On the one hand it has made fantastic fabrications on so-called "communist activities in violation of the ceasefire" with the purpose of slandering us odiously. On the other hand, it has ordered its armed units to conduct operations, sometimes on a large scale, with the participation of armoured cars, heavy artillery and aircraft with a view to nibbling at the liberated zone under the control of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam. It has intensified the policy of repression and terrorism against various strata of the population in the area under its control, banned all activies in favour of peace, democratic liberties and national concord. We must also underline another very serious thing, that is the attitude of non-cooperation, the hostile attitude of the Saigon administration toward the delegation of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam Government and the delegation of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam to the Four-Party Joint Military Commission. The Saigon administration has also organized acts of hooliganism against our delegations and has caused to the latter permanent and very big difficulties in their life and activities. So far, three weeks after the signing of the Agreement, the consultative conference between the two South Vietnamese parties whose task is to discuss and solve a series of very important problems of the Agreement, concerning the internal affairs of South Viet Nam, mainly political problems, has not yet begun its work. For their part, the International Commission of Control and Supervision, chiefly the Polish and Hungarian delegations, have encountered many big difficulties in the discharge of the Commission's tasks : supervising and controlling the implementation of the provisions of the Agreement in conformity with its stipulations. These impudent designs and acts of the Saigon administration have become too evident. Its "thief crying stop thief" behaviour decidedly cannot fool our people and broad sections of world public opinion."

Dealing with the new situation and tasks in North Viet Nam, Premier Pham Van Dong said :

"The great victory which we have just recorded is creating still more favourable conditions to build socialism in the North, build the socialist economy, the socialist culture and the socialist man, strengthen the North in all domains : political, economic, national defence, and bring into play in a more positive way the influence of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam.

"We must understand clearly the primordial importance of the restoration and development of the national economy on a large scale, at a quick tempo and a steady pace, of the rapid switch from small production to large scale socialist production, especially in agriculture...

"An immediate requirement is to quickly stabilize the economic situation and the people's life, restore and develop the economy at the same time while striving to consolidate national defence. In a few years to come, it is necessary not only to strive to surpass the pre-war production level but also to enter directly into the building of a new economic structure, in order to lay the groundwork for the development on a large-scale and at a quick tempo in the following years."

Chairman of the National Assembly Standing Committee Truong Chinh, on behalf of the National Assembly, commended the Hanoi population for their achievements in production and fighting, especially the victory over the US strategic air offensive on the capital city last December.

The National Assembly also heard a report on the diplomatic struggle submitted by Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh, and a report on the armed struggle by Vice-Premier and Minister of National Defence General Vo Nguyen Giap.

QUANG DA
after the cease-fire

The Quang Da people greeting the return of peace

LIKE their fellow-citizens across the country, the Quang Da people and armed forces welcomed the return of peace with elation and a feeling of pride. The moment longed for by a million inhabitants here during so many years of gruelling fighting and hardships, had finally come.

My friends and I mingled with the crowd streaming along the roads, across the ricefields, up hills and down dales, carrying Provisional Revolutionary Government flags. That day, Quang Da looked like a forest of yellow-starred and red-blue flags. Flags fluttered on Height Hon Tau, Mounts Non Nuoc and Son Tra, all over Xuyen Hoa, Dien Hong, Dien Thang and elsewhere.

In the liberated district of Duy Xuyen we met white-haired men of seventy or more, who, with their fellow-villagers, went about to plant and protect *their* flags.

Old Nguyen Van B. of village H. hoisted one in front of his house. His four sons and daughters and eleven grand children had taken part in the resistance war.

"I chose to live here over ten years of privations and sufferings—he said to me in an emotion-frayed voice—rather than join the concentration zone, in anticipation of this day. Now that I've become a citizen of an independent country, no pleasure is greater than planting the Revolution's flag on my native land."

As in other parts of Quang Da, the people of H. had had to confront a most cruel war. Thousands of tons of bombs and bullets had been showered on this village, and now not a dwelling, not a plot of land, not a treetop was free from traces of the aggressor's crimes. Each inhabitant had received an average of one ton of bombs and shells annually. For some time, the Yanks came here every month to take away all oldagers and children to "refugee" camps. However the population refused to be talked into leaving their native place. One-third of them was killed or injured, hundreds of houses burnt, rebuilt and burnt anew, many of the best food-crop fields ploughed up again and again by bombs. The people stubbornly resisted, and in 1972 they and the local guerillas knocked down or captured no less a thousand Saigon and American troops.

The day peace was restored in Quang Da heralded in a new period for its people — one of reconciliation and concord, and of reconstruction after long years of devastation.

We ran into eight soldiers of the Saigon army, Battalion 1, Regiment 2, Infantry Division 3. Having left their unit for good, they recounted their first encounter with revolutionary cadres and people of village T. With intense emotion Nguyen Van Ty said: "Now that I am back among our fellow-countrymen, I can realize better the Revolution's and their solicitude and generosity. The PRG policy has moved us deeply and shown us the right path."

I paid a visit to the Chairman of the People's Revolutionary Committee of village D., Dien Ban district, as he was busy getting the most urgent jobs started. By the side of fresh bomb-craters triumph arches had been erected, with victory-greeting slogans. Thatch cottages recently burnt down by American bombs were being rebuilt.

The chairman showed us reconstruction plans worked out by the local administration and population, and, first and foremost, those relating to the resettlement of all returnees from occupied urban centres or "refugee" camps. A labour force had already been organized for the reclaiming of new lands. In their exultation, the people of Quang Da are not unaware of the big difficulties lying ahead. Most particulary, they keep their eyes skinned and stand ready to deal harshly with any violation of the peace agreement by the Saigon regime.

P.V.

here and there

The path of salvation

Everything will ultimately come to an end. A Viet Nam peace agreement was at last signed on January 27, 1973. A sigh of relief was heaved by everyone in the world, irrespective of nationality and race. In Viet Nam, right from the first moments, everywhere from north to south, crowds of people gathered under the public address system to listen to broadcasts of the provisions of the Paris accord. All faces were beaming with a calm and thoughtful joy, which indicated the serenity and pride of a nation aware of the difficulties it would still have to face to have its rights respected, but full of confidence in its own fortitude, long standing tradition of militancy and indomitableness.

For history is there to bear witness, in an intransigent, irrefutable and consistent way, to such sterling qualities which have not been tarnished in the passage of time. Whenever our people's independence and freedom is challenged or threatened by a foreign aggression, the only path of salvation proves to be the union of all social, religious, national, etc. sections cemented by an unqualified feeling of concord in the common effort to resist the invaders. Another tradition of ours, never discontinued, is our magnanimous forgiveness toward the repentant, which promises to those organizations or individuals led astray for one reason or another from the nation's path and awakened in time to their mistake and mending their ways that a share of honourability and happiness will be reserved to them in the resplendent future of the country, as a reward for their endeavour of resipiscence and oblivion of past bitterness.

Inspiring friendship

In these exulting days, we have been overwhelmed by the flows of congratulations and praises from all our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

Viet Nam has been extolled as the honour and conscience of the century, the pride of humanity, the symbol of justice and of the nations' value, the crystalization of human virtues, the fatherland of all those who are fighting on this earth and a great nation, author of the greatest epic of our times. Its victory over imperialism has been described as an unprecedented achievement in the history of mankind, for which the latter will be always indebted and which instils faith into the peoples battling against imperialism for independence, freedom and social progress and shows the human race a moral value never seen before. Such superlatives however have filled us with a mixed sense of pride and anxiety, pride in having lived up to the tradition of our forefathers, anxiety not to disappoint those of our brothers who expect from us moral support, and enlightening experience in the battle for the liberation of the nations.

We have been flooded with presents, services and help whose material, technical, intellectual and moral significance has been enhanced by the selflessness, thoughtfulness and heartfelt affection of their donors. We have been literally showered with requests for statement of our needs, for alliances between our cities and their counterparts of friendly countries, with invitations to festivals in the honour of our success, with offers to come and do a share in our reconstruction work in education, health, arts, technique, building, etc... even in such chores as child-minding or rice-cooking to give us more time for our tasks in national rehabilitation. Hosts of young and attractive Western girl students are learning Vietnamese in anticipation of visits to Viet Nam and even of marriage and settlement there. Such spontaneity, such sincerity is so beautiful and moving that our joy is boundless and beyond expression. So we have not fought in vain and the prize we have won is worth our sufferings and sacrifices.

The Saigon administration's hooliganism

Our friends are not unaware that our path is still bristling with obstacles.

Righ in the first days of the coming into force of the Paris Agreement (January 28, 1973) and even during Tet, the Saigon administration deliberately broke the cease-fire provisions with police and military actions against people having at heart peace, national reconciliation and concord, massacres of old people and women, inroads into PRG-controlled areas undertaken by company, batallion and regiment size units with air, armour and artillery support, wanton bombings and poundings of free villages, etc. In nearly a month, the Thieu men, aided and abetted by the US, systematically committed 23,560 violations of the cease-fire, or a daily average of 800.

They have been trying to hamstring the operation of the machinery supervising the implementation of the agreement, chiefly of the Four-Party Joint Military Commission by going the length of dastardly assaulting DRVN and PRG officers members. The Ban Me Thuot incident shocked *AFP*, *ABC* and *Reuter* correspondents and prompted them to express their sympathy with us by informing us that they had sounded the alarm over the crude breaches of the Saigon regime.

The latter's hooliganism has only thrown more light on its true colours.

HUONG NAM

PRG DELEGATION VISITS ALGERIA

AT the invitation of the Government of the Algerian People's and Democratic Republic, a delegation of the RSVN Provisional Revolutionary Government headed by Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh paid a friendship visit to Algeria from Feb. 15 to 19, 1973.

During its stay in Algeria, the Delegation was received by Houari Boumedienne, President of the Revolutionary Council and of the Council of Ministers.

Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh and the PRG Delegation laid a wreath at the War Heroes' Cemetery, called on Dr Ahmed Taleh Ibrahimin Minister for Information and Culture, had contacts with members of the leading body of the FNL Party at the latter's seat and talks with the Presidents of regional People's Committees at a rally on the occasion of a Congress of those People's Committees.

Cordial talks were held between the PRG Delegation headed by Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh and an Algerian Government Delegation headed by Foreign Minister A. Bouteflika. They emphasized the special character of the bonds of brotherhood linking the Vietnamese and the Algerian peoples--a solid basis for the further development of future relations between the two countries.

The RSVN-Algerian Joint Communiqué released on this occasion pointed out:

The RSVN side "highly valued the tremendous achievements recorded in all fields during the last ten years by the heroic Algerian people to defend and consolidate their national independence and build up their country." It "welcomed the firm stand adopted by Algeria in supporting the various national liberation movements and making an active contribution to the non-alignment policy."

The Algerian side "felt greatly stimulated by the signing of the Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Viet Nam, warmly hailed the great victory of the heroic Vietnamese people," and considered it as "an important contribution to the development of the national liberation movement throughout the world and a source of inspiration for all freedom fighters in Asia, Africa and Latin America."

The joint communiqué stressed: "Algeria is of the opinion that the US government and the Saigon administration, as signatories to the Agreement, should abide by and fully implement all provisions of the Agreement, respect the Vietnamese people's right to self-determination. True to her policy of militant solidarity, Algeria will spare no effort to support the brotherly Vietnamese people in their struggle for the consolidation of peace and national reconstruction."

WHOLE WORLD REJOICES AT VIET NAM'S VICTORY

THE Paris Agreement on Viet Nam has brought to a close the Vietnamese people's decades-long struggle against US aggression and for independence and freedom. It was a great gain not only for the Vietnamese nation but also for the whole mankind that has at heart independence, freedom, justice and peace.

It has been universally recognized as such for a little less than a month now. Praises have been sung everywhere in the world, and the event has been celebrated in all parts of the globe. Heartfelt congratulations and wishes have been streaming in to Presidents Nguyen Huu Tho and Huynh Tan Phat and other RSVN leaders, and to the entire people of South Viet Nam.

Messages, letters or statements of the governments of the Soviet Union, China and the other socialist countries, of Cambodia and Laos and other Third world nations, and of democratic, peace and solidarity organizations, all expressed the joy and pride of revolutionaries in the world and their trust in the South Vietnamese on the occasion of their unparalleled achievement. Their matchless courage and unshakable determination have been again glorified and pledges made of a continued fight at the side of the Vietnamese for US-Saigon strict implementation of the Paris Agreement, and of uninterrupted all-sided assistance to the South Vietnamese for the building of a peaceful, independent, democratic and prosperous South Viet Nam and for the eventual peaceful reunification of Viet Nam.

The Vietnamese people's victory has been extolled as a "great and unusual contribution to the advancement of history," "a peak of the victorious anti-imperialist movement," "an immortal epic of the human race," a "victory over the most ruthless aggression and most shameful intervention in the history of mankind," "a legendary combat and unmatched victory that will go down in the history of progressive humanity," an "unprecedented accomplishment of man," and a "victory for which the whole world will be indebted." The SVN NFL and the RSVN PRG have been lauded for their "staunch, intelligent and clearsighted leadership" that has taken their people from one success to another, and that has won them respect, esteem and credit both at home and abroad.

In this same jubilant atmosphere, the world peoples have stepped up their solidarity and support activities, under a variety of new forms. Money and blood collections for Viet Nam to heal the wounds of war, to rebuild destroyed hospitals and schools have been in full swing in many countries. Reminiscent of the previous drive to enlist volunteers for South Viet Nam is a stirring movement now taking place in many countries, especially in Cuba and Europe for voluntary service to help Viet Nam's economic rehabilitation and other projects.

No word can appropriately describe the world progressives' warm, generous feeling for Viet Nam. Having, for Viet Nam's sake and in defiance of all retaliation of a country boasting of being the most powerful nation in the world—even of imprisonment, savage terror and persecution—spent many a sleepless night and many cold, snowy days in street demonstrations, and months in exile to escape from

victimization by reactionaries, how could they be indifferent to a common victory of such a significance? Their elation at the victory of the South Vietnamese people, therefore, is entirely justifiable, and their pride legitimate. How deep is this internationalist sense of solidarity that has broken down all barriers and brought together people of all political tendencies and religious creeds under the same banner of independence, freedom, peace and social progress, and make them share difficulties in combat and joy in victory. It has encouraged the people of South Viet Nam to march forward fearlessly and will now inspire them in this new stage of struggle for the implementation and consolidation of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and for the preservation of peace in this region and elsewhere in the world.

So, our sincere thanks go to all the friends and brothers in all continents for their unfailing support and assistance to the fighting and victorious South Viet Nam. May the militant solidarity between the people of South Viet Nam and progressives of the world always flourish!

DAI LIEN

In brief

FRANCE: "We know that many more struggles are ahead for you."

Laurent Shwartz, French professor of mathematics, has donated 100,000 francs to the RSVN PRG. In a letter to Foreign Minister Nguyen Thi Binh, he wrote: "The Vietnamese people have endured so many difficulties and hardships but have also shown their strength and courage unparalleled in history and checked US imperialism, the biggest imperialist power. Once again I wish to reaffirm our complete solidarity with the Vietnamese people at present as well as in the future because we know that many more struggles are awaiting you".

INTERNATIONAL PRESS INSTITUTE: Protests against Saigon preventing foreign pressmen's normal activities.

On February 8, 1973, the International Press Institute issued a protest against the Saigon administration for restricting and hindering the activities of, and threats against foreign pressmen in South Viet Nam.

The communiqué pointed out that the restrictions imposed by Nguyen Van Thieu in his February 7 order contravened Article II of the cease-fire agreement. The communiqué urged the Saigon administration to ensure the freedom of foreign pressmen to report on events in Viet Nam.

G.D.R: "Solidarity with, and support for Viet Nam, more opportune than ever."

Motivated by this common feeling and determination, people all over the German Democratic Republic have launched many mass drives to win more support for Viet Nam with very diversified activities, such as the "For the Vietnamese children", "Electricity for Viet Nam," "Bicycles for Viet Nam," "Art creation for Viet Nam," "A creche for Viet Nam," "A school for Viet Nam," "A hospital for Viet Nam," "A bookshop for Viet Nam"... movements

10 million marks have been collected and just been sent to Viet Nam by the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions.

THE INTERNATIONAL LAWYERS CONFERENCE ON INDOCHINA: The Paris Agreement on Viet Nam has brought out more prominently the representive character of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam.

The Third International Lawyers' Conference on Indochina meeting in Brussels on February 10 and 11, 1973 passed a resolution underscoring the fundamental principles of international law contained in the Paris Agreement, the main principles regarding the implementation of the Agreement as well as concrete steps to be taken to contribute to the ending of the war and the preservation of peace in Viet Nam.

At the gathering, Paul Isoart, head of the French Public Law Department, analyzed the juridical aspect of the Paris Agreement on Viet Nam and pointed out that the Agreement has brought out still more prominently the representative character of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of the Republic of South Viet Nam.

SOUTH VIET NAM CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE SOUTH VIET NAM NATIONAL FRONT FOR LIBERATION